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of danger. The rest need not be told. At the foot of the tower a warden came along and took charge of "the director."

Human life is full of instances of twisted logic or we might say curved logic: relics of the logic of primitive man, the logic of false analogy, of wrong generalization, of misconception of facts, etc. If we treated these forms of twisted logical theories seriously we could *a priori* develop systems which would be consistent with themselves, but could not be applied to reality. There they would fail because reality has a definite logic which in its applications becomes often very complicated, but is quite plain, quite consistent and let us say straight or even or level in its general principles. I do not mean to say that these original theories of logic are to be condemned and rejected; no, they must be studied and understood. They have their field in the realm of fairy tales and of Utopian romances. They must be taken seriously in the domain of religious mysticism as well as in the symbolic ceremonies of the church. They constitute a world of their own in which another kind of causation is effective and where the mind of man is not bound to respect the character of reality and of natural law, but imposes upon the phantoms of his imagination rules laid down by his own sweet will.

P. C.

THE FETISH OF ORIGINALITY.

"Die Wahrheit war schon längst gefunden,
Hat edle Geisterschaft verbunden;
Das alte Wahre, fass es an!" Goethe.

The notion of spontaneity dies hard. It was at high tide when primitive man read his own abounding vitality into the environment. It has lost caste in these scientific days, and many of us still cling to the belief that we are living in a world of interdependent things, where changes take place not capriciously but according to rule, and where a settled causal order gives us the power both of retrospect and prevision. But the pack of knowledge has been again shuffled, and some are attempting to give us a new deal. So far as the cards have come out, they present unfamiliar signs and pictures that bewilder. We miss, for example, the "things which abide" on which so many of nature's vicissitudes used to be founded; we confront self-originating actions which have no support in objects; indeed, the whole universe, as they tell us, is made up of just such actions minus things.[1] Substance reappears as an impulse to create, and it is through this *exigence de la création* that chaos passes into cosmos and matter arises. Then the torch of spontaneity is handed on to organisms, making it possible to explain as well as illuminate the mysterious realm of life by what is called *l'élan de la vie,* or *le grand souffle de la vie.* In both inorganic and organic new events constantly start into being; there is an irresistible rush upward and onward of the actions which act; anything old may happen anyhow, something new may suddenly come up anywhen from anywhere. Nature, in a word, is "original." Her supposed link with the past is a scientific superstition soon to be outgrown, and her supposed amenableness to prediction must henceforth rank as crass intellectualism. She is free beyond the wildest dreams of caprice; her wilful products pour forth unceasingly; and it is not her recurrences, her repetitions, her imitations, but her endless "novelties" to which our gaze is directed.

This belief in the spontaneity of nature is of a piece with the idea of self-sufficiency in men. The notion of human originality has survived the exaggerated individualism of the nineteenth century into our own day. The cult of "self-reliance" is still a factor in so-called character-building. We continue to be warned, in various voices and from various quarters, against slavish subservience to inherited modes of action and conventional ways of thought. There is a widespread distrust of "ruts," and a more or less outspoken prejudice against "beaten tracks." The age rings with the praise of originality: It is not the plodding worker, but the man of new ideas who is most in evidence. In art, literature, science, politics, the palm is everywhere awarded to the original mind. There is optimism in this tendency, and its effect in stimulating effort is undoubted. The injunction "Be yourself—do not imitate!" has frequently brought out native powers that might else have slumbered. Even the *délire des grandeurs* must have had its influence upon progress. But how far can the cult of originality make good its claim? To what extent is the individual really self-sourced and spontaneous in his activities? When and where does he cease to be dependent?

Unless all signs are at fault, man himself is an imitation. Not only, by virtue of being an organism, is he separated *toto coelo* from all the forms of non-organic existence; in fundamental characters he at once inherits from and resembles all the living creatures that have preceded him. The worm that crawls and the biped who looks up to the heavens carry on the same physiological processes, however these may differ in complexity and incidence; even the non-locomotive plant shares with the higher order of animal the activities which are needed for self-maintenance. The doings of human beings are similarly linked by the bond of likeness. If man is an expanded model of the lower organic life, he is also an imitation of the individuals who belong to his own society. The activities of daily life, vary as they may from place to place and from occupation to occupation, are connected by deep and subtle resemblances These begin for animal life in periods of rest and wakefulness, of play and food-hunting, of pairing and rearing, estivation and hibernation. For developing man there are the night fire in cave or camp, the division of the bright hours into spaces for work and meals, the daily glow and gloom of the hearthstone, the morning ablution and the evening prayer, the recurring periods of worship and sacrifice, just as for civilized society the week has its theater-going or church attendance, the year its politics and voting, its stock-taking and rent-paying, its fasting and its vacations. Somewhere and somewhen people are always doing the same things, always carrying on activities which, on the ground of common elements, can be grouped into great classes. The functions performed may differ, the actions involved may vary, but under analysis the resemblances only grow more profound, and the unlikenesses more superficial, for both are determined by the structural unity of life itself.

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[1] Henri Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice.* "Il n'y a pas de choses, il n'y a que des actions" (p. 270).

Not only is man an imitation of earlier organisms and of other men, he is an imitator of himself. His most spontaneous actions show the recurrence, in however modified a form, of his activities in the past. Habit is heredity writ large; and the growing ease of a direction once taken, enlisting the whole power of the organism in its favor, ensures those repetitions which Kierkergaard has called "the satisfying bread of daily existence." Meanwhile man is being constantly assimilated to his surroundings and his society. As molecules must resemble each other to form any particular substance, so human individuals must be fundamentally alike in ways of acting and thinking if they are to cooperate. The lower animals are born in an advanced state of fitness for life; men need to be "licked into shape." The process of qualifying them for human society begins with home education, through which speech and customs are passed on by the old to the new generation. The schools simply enlarge this process with a formal training directed, not to the encouragement of originality, but to the moulding of the individual, in knowledge, conduct and ideals, into likeness with the race. The all-potent assimilating forces of every-day life then come into operation. The individual who would be himself yields submission to his social environment in thousands of ways. He acquires habits that are suggested to him; he accommodates himself to customs; swayed by institutions, he is constantly under the domination of laws. If his modes of life are imposed from without, so are his speech, his ideas, and the general trend of his thought. The current words, the street and newspaper slang of a locality, are put into his mouth. As his behavior is dictated by the "good form" of a particular society, so he is influenced to wear clothes generally like those worn by everybody else. Consciously or unconsciously to himself, his home life is also thus regulated. It is the "proper" furniture, carpets and pictures with which he provides his house. He does not spontaneously choose an Aphrodite of Milo or a statue of Nike for ornaments; these are selected for him, little as he is aware of the fact. His very personality belongs, in part at least, to others. It is subject, as the psychologists show, to more or less permanent modification by every other personality with which he happens to have intercourse. A thinks he is always A, yet when he comes into contact with B he becomes C; when D visits him he mysteriously changes into E, and so on all through the alphabet. All the time, if a self-conscious individualist, he is struggling to be "original"; yet all the time, in spite of, or unknown to himself, he is imitating. Even his mental furnishings are largely dictated by others. A work in the hands of a friend, gossip about the latest novel and its phenomenal success, some printed notice of the week's "best seller," perhaps merely the glittering cover in a bookseller's store—these are among the influences which now and then bind even the sturdiest individualist captive to his *milieu.* As for opinions, he would fain be "original" in them, but the ease of thinking as others think is so alluring, the difficulty of differing from them so disagreeable, that his best laid plans for independent judgments "gang aft agley." The wisest of his conclusions in the most lucid of his intervals are meanwhile buttressed in the judgments of the race.

The larger angles of human life are also being worn down. If the nation is an imitation of previous stages of national existence, repeating, with whatever variations and modifications, the ideas, customs, institutions of those stages, so is the nation more and more an imitation of other nations. In the earlier days of the race, seas, mountains, rivers, were effective barriers to intercourse, and the separated peoples grew up in an individualism of life and thought, of costume as well as custom, which still lingers here and there in Europe and the Orient. But the science which binds continents together with railways, which pierces mountains and navigates the most distant oceans, bids fair to diminish national "originality" almost to the point of disappearance. Nor is the movement less in evidence where the changes wrought take the direction of progress. Cities catch from each other the methods that make for social and political advance; industrial improvements pass from country to country; new ideas of government, especially of democracy in government, are rapidly becoming the common property and heritage of all the peoples. Yet through it all, whether we call it "standardizing," holding-down, or levelling-up, the process is one which insists on the assimilation of each group to the general life of all the groups. The nation may plume itself on its "originality"—may determine to be itself and only itself. It must yield, and is constantly yielding, to the influences that reach it from without. For it is not in the superficial differences that linger, nor yet in the progressive variations sure to arise, but in the fundamental likenesses which co-operation at once requires and helps to produce, that the hope of a world democracy is bound up.

But there is surely scope for originality in the free life of the spirit, in the products of the mind. Admitted that language itself was a joint creation, the great ideas of the race must have flashed up suddenly in the brain of some supremely endowed individual. How suddenly? The existence and unity of Deity were proclaimed more than 3000 years ago by the Hindu Vedas; at least as ancient is the pantheism which teaches the oneness of God and the world. The conception of an ether system from which all matter arises and to which it returns may be found, in however rude a form, in the *apeiron* of Anaximander. The modern scientific teleology which with Naegeli and Haeckel endows the atoms with elementary feeling, had its anticipation in the hylozoism of the Greeks. Newton's law of the equality of action and reaction was implied in the strife which Heraclitus read into the very constitution of things. The principle of the conservation of energy, "discovered" or experimentally demonstrated by Mayer, Helmholtz, Colding and Joule, may be found in Descartes, Kant, Huygens, and Leibnitz; the earliest suggestions of it date back to Aristotle, who spoke of the maintenance of the whole amid change of the parts, and to Telesius, who traced the unchanging "mass" of matter to a power of conservation. The atomic theory, which is still the fundamental creed of modern chemistry, was proclaimed by Leucippus and Democritus, who also clearly formulated the causal law which excludes chance from the natural order. The latest and "newest" theory in physics is the electron theory of matter, yet Lord Kelvin in his essay "Aepinus Atomized" traced its main features to Franz Hoch who wrote in 1759. Nor is the doctrine of evolution new in either its general or its special aspects. Not only did ancient thought contain the notion of the origin of life from the inanimate, it adumbrated, however imperfectly, the idea of the progression of life forms through natural selection. Democritus taught that living beings arose from slime, Anaxagoras that organisms came from the damp earth under the influence of warmth. Both Heraclitus and Empedocles announced the germ of Darwinism in their assertion that forms unsuited to the conditions perished, while forms suited to them were maintained.

Perhaps we find more originality in the sciences. Strictly delimited from each other by name and "special" to an extent not altogether good for them, they touch and interpenetrate each other at a thousand points. Proud in their isolated preoccupations, they are borrowers *à haute volée.* Each transmits by a sort of osmosis to the sciences most nearly related to it, and all benefit more or less from the contributions of each. The astronomer must be something of a mathematician and geometer, of a physicist and chemist; the physicist must know something of the inorganic sciences. What would the biologist do without chemistry, the paleontologist without geology, the sociologist without biology, anthropology and linguistics? Is it because science is modern that the sciences are interdependent? Mathematics and geometry come up to us from the dim beginnings of civilization, and despite up-to-date theories of hyperspace, Euclid is still a name to conjure with. We have spectroscopic analysis and heaven-piercing mirrors, yet astronomy was practiced in the ancient worlds of Chaldea, Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt, and our star maps are still scattered over with Arabic and Latin names. The Chaldeans knew of the phases of Venus over 4000 years before Galilei saw them through his glass; the rotundity of the earth was reasoned out by the Greeks centuries before Magellan's ship circumnavigated the globe. We discuss the ether and its properties, call new compounds to the aid of our industries, watch the process of cell division through our microscopes, and gather endless materials for the sciences of mind and society; yet there have been physicists, chemists, biologists, psychologists, by whatever names they called themselves, since nature-study began.

The sciences as "applied" ought to yield us the required evidence of spontaneity. Even here the bond with past achievement is unmistakable. Telescope, steam engine, telegraph—all the great "innovations" that impress us in the history of scientific progress—become intelligible only in the light of their historic background. The telescope no more came full-fledged from the brain of an inventor than did the spectacle-glass, and both had centuries of experiment in optics behind them. The magnifying lense focussed the solar ray amid Assyrian darkness, and the sun-dial which tells the bright hours in our summer gardens pointed its shadowy finger to "the time" at least half a century before Christ. The steam-engine was anticipated in the aeolipile of Heron; navigation had the magnetic needle in second-century Cathay; telegraph, telephone and dynamo were implicit in Gilbert and lay in the experiment of Oersted like the statue in the block of marble. The thonged pebble preceded the Nasmyth hammer, as the clepsydra with toothed wheel preceded the clock, and as the rude brick printing of Babylonia preceded the movable types of Forster and Gutenberg. We may call the digging stick of the Australian savage the ancestor of the steam plough; the stone sickle, the roasting tray, and later the tribulum, as Mason reminds us, were the progenitors of the steam harvester. The mechanically driven street carriage gave a good account of itself in pagan times, and one of the labors of Rameses II—to say nothing of Xerxes—anticipated by more than 3000 years the modern canal-piercing operations at Suez and Panama. The Greeks had sails when the Pleiades were named; the seas are still white with canvass.

Will not the wonder-world of machinery give us some glimpse of the innovator depending wholly upon himself? Modern machines are vastly more complex than those known to the ancients, yet they are all products of cooperative effort resting on past achievement, and there is some justification for the claim that they embody a series of improvements rather than a succession of absolutely new creations. "Examine at random," says W. H. Smyth, "any one of half a dozen lines of mechanical invention. One characteristic common to them all will instantly arrest attention. They present nothing more than a mere outgrowth of the manual processes and machines of earlier times. Some operation, once performed by hand tools, is expedited by a device which enables the foot as well as the hand to be employed. Then power is applied; the hand or foot operation, or both, are made automatic, and possibly, as a still further improvement, several of these automatic devices are combined into one. All the while the fundamental basis is the old, original hand process; hence—except in the extremely improbable event that this was the best method—all the successive improvements are simply in the direction, not of real novelty, but of mere modification and multiplication."

Not only must the new machine, however "original," be founded on experience of all past machines; its "innovation" must take the course traced out for it, on the one hand by the properties of matter and the nature of energy, on the other by the underlying structural unity of all life. It is this unity, and not anything like voluntary choice, which makes man an unconscious imitator of mechanical contrivances first developed by organisms much lower in the scale of existence than himself. Hydrostatic principles are followed in the flow of blood through the arteries and veins; mechanical principles find illustration in the interplay of muscles, sinews and bones; the lever is a large factor in the movements of animals, and there is a ball-bearing at every joint. The awl and the saw were brought to perfection by the boring insect, the beginnings of navigation are to be found in the floating pupa skin of the gnat and the sail of the nautilus. Uncounted ages before the African laid his earth traps, the dark continent was honeycombed with the pitfalls of the ant-lion. The climbing hooks of the tiger-beetle antedated grappling irons, as the scale armor of the armadillo preceded the soldier's cuirass. Poison was used by plant and animal long before the savage tipped his arrows with it; the gymnotus and his congeners invented the electric battery. The lowly fire-fly still outdoes man's highest powers of contrivance with a method of producing light without heat.

If the appeal be made to the fine arts, what does architecture say? Here there is indeed variation from age to age, yet through all mutations due to fashion or taste the laws of stability and proportion persist. Our decorative public buildings continue to remind us of Greece and Rome or of the Middle Ages. What is our "high-style" architecture other than Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Romanesque, Gothic, Italian, or of endless minglings and modifications of these? No wonder that Fergusson distinguished between "the true and the copying or imitative styles" when he wrote: "It is not perhaps too much to say that no perfectly truthful architectural building has been erected in Europe since the Reformation....In modern designs there is always an effort to reproduce the style of some foreign country or that of some bygone age—frequently both." Nor is the critic of to-day any the less emphatic. "Since the close of the 18th century," says Arthur L. Frothingham, "there has been no true style anywhere, but simply a series of fashions chasing each other across the background of equally mutable social conditions." "It has been a trouble to many," writes Russell Sturgis, "that in our recent American architecture a whole building, or a large and showy member of a building, should have been so closely copied from some fine old structure in Europe that it is easy of recognition. But those who are greatly exercised about this should not need to be told that such close copying has long been the rule in details. For what purpose are used those large photographs of small details of which every architect has as many as he can afford?....One need hardly fear contradiction in saying that in the majority of cases they are simply used for copying."

Sculpture and painting, essentially imitative arts, have models common to all. If it be said that the originality in this field consists in an unexcelled closeness of imitation, we may fairly ask to have the superiority indicated to us. The modern artist has undoubtedly outdone his predecessor in giving us "real" views of natural objects. But how modern is the realism? Man of the flint-chipping age carved figures on bone with a fidelity to life which anthropologists never tire of admiring. "Nearly every great group of animals," says A. C. Haddon, "is represented in native art, and often so faithfully that it is possible for the naturalist to give the animals their scientific names." Is it. then, in the ideal, the subjective element that we are to find spontaneity? Why have we not surpassed Phidias, Michel Angelo and Canova in sculpture, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci in painting? Nor is decorative art in any better case. A vast number of our modern patterns in ornamentation are to be found in the art of primitive peoples. The inventors of "new designs" in our art schools and elsewhere make a liberal use of the same natural objects which have served their clan in all the ages.

In music the notion of merely imitative effects seems overwhelmed by the thought of enormous resources of combination. Yet the recombining depends for its newness, so-called, only upon the total structure of the composition, since all compositions consist of series of notes which have been repeated and re-repeated since drums were first sounded and stringed instruments came into existence. Within the general repetitions, moreover, there are special resemblances which connect the great compositions with the link, not only of heredity, but also of family likeness. The historians of the art are not content merely to ask what Richard Strauss, Brahms, Wagner, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann, even Beethoven would be without Bach. They rearrange the imitations and redistribute the indebtedness. Mozart and Philipp Emanuel Bach are brought in to explain Haydn. Chopin's harmonic system is re-discovered in Wagner. Handel, as well as Bach, reappear in Elijah, the Saint Paul, and the Reformation Symphony of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. If Beethoven "seems to have included in his mighty symphonies all that had been," the same critic assures us that "in his ninth symphony and last piano sonatas may be found the seeds that sprouted into the luxuriant forests of the Wagner music, and gave birth to the dream-haunted imaginings of Chopin, Schumann and Berlioz." Everywhere we hear the "dominant note" gathering the past to its timbre, but only to sound down again through the ages. "Originality" and indebtedness in music refuse to be disassociated. Note the dedication of a recent book on *Grieg and His Music* to "Edward MacDowell, America's most original composer, who was more influenced by Edvard Grieg than by any other master!"

The chosen home of spontaneity, then, must be literature, since here we recognize the actual workings of the individual mind. The fundamental likenesses of nature and man predestined the family resemblances of *belles lettres* the world over from the beginnings. The Mahabharata tells us all that we need to know of their antiquity. The ancients—India, Greece, Persia, Arabia—have given us not only inspiration, but also style and material. Philostratus, the Athenian, supplied B. C. 170 the original for Ben Jonson's "Song to Celia"; the Book of Job and the old Hindu theater gave Goethe the idea for the Faust prologue. That the Iliad and the Odyssey are the chief sources of all later story writing has become a literary commonplace. It was this universal indebtedness to Homer which led Voltaire to write, "If this father of poetry could recover from his descendants all they have borrowed from him, what would remain of the Æneid, of the Jerusalem Delivered, of Roland, of the Lusiade, of the Henriade, and of all the things of this kind one dare name?" Virgil imitated Theocritus, says M. Benoist, "not only in the choice of subjects, but also in the details of his style and of his personification; he borrows verses sometimes entirely, being content only to translate." And Eichoff adds the accusation that the great Latin poet copied from his compatriots Ennius, Attius, Catullus, and Nevius.

The moderns begin, but do not end, with the imitation of antiquity. Chénier, says B. de Fougière, "has not a scene which he has not borrowed from the ancients," and it is the opinion of Alfred de Musset that "Greek tragedy, that majestic and sublime ocean, gave birth to both Racine and Alfieri." The "Wasps" of Aristophanes reappear in Racine's "Les Plaideurs," as the fables of Æsop and Phedrus reappear in Gellert, La Fontaine, Kryloff, and Afanassieff. Boccaccio gave rise to a host of imitations, among them the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, and sixteenth century English poets did not disdain to polish their compositions under the light shed by Dante, Ariosto and Petrarch. Spanish romances were the foundation of Spenser's Faerie Queen, and Spenser himself had an imitator in Phineas Fletcher. Milton looked for sources and suggestions to Homer, Virgil, Tasso, the plays of Pindar, and the Old and New Testament. Renz de Gourman calls Fénelon's "Télémaque," itself a borrowed style, "the most imitated work, phrase for phrase, in all literature." As Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors" had its source in Plautus, so Corneille's "Cid" has been traced to a Spanish drama by Guillen de Castro. "Dryden's second best play," says Saintsbury, "is built with an audacity to which only great genius or great folly could lead, on the lines of Shakespeare. His longest and most ambitious poem follows with surprising faithfulness the lines of Chaucer. His most effective piece of tragic description is a versified paraphrase—the most magnificent paraphrase perhaps ever written —of the prose of Boccaccio." "The imitation of Pope," according to Edmund Gosse, "grew to be a rage from Sweden to Italy," yet the brilliant Pope was himself an imitator. His "January and May" is a modernized version of Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale"; his "Dunciad" was modelled upon the "MacFlecknoe" of Dryden. If Pope sat at the feet of Horace, Sterne borrowed from Rabelais, Montaigne, and half a dozen others. Defoe studied Bunyan assiduously, "hence the excellence of Robinson Crusoe." In the writings of Charles Lamb look for Sir Thomas Browne, Fuller, Earle and Overbury, Burton and Isaak Walton. And so the story goes on.

How far a great writer who compels others to copy him may himself be a borrower is conspicuously seen in the case of Goethe. "The air which Goethe breathed," says Hermann Grimm, "was filled with Rousseau's spirit; and we have only to compare Werther and Lotte with St. Preux and Julie to be convinced that without the latter the former would never have been created. The heroes of the "Nouvelle Héloïse" and of Goethe's romance, if their silhouettes could be placed side by side, would be found to coincide line for line. If St. Preux and Werther had met in life they would have regarded each other with the terror with which one meets his double....What Goethe added from his own character and Jerusalem's personality appear only like the accident of custom and situation....It seemed to Goethe as if a special providence had thrown Rousseau's romance into his hands, and he felt compelled to adhere to his model. But not alone for the conception of the characters in Werther is Goethe indebted to Rousseau. He is in fact in quite as great a measure dependent upon him for the color."

The fervid and far-famed Chateaubriand took Bernardin de St. Pierre for his model, yet "you will not find a single page in all our writers," says Sainte-Beuve, "which has not had its germ in Chateaubriand"; and it is to Chateaubriand that Lanson traces Victor Hugo, "alike in his picturesque descriptions, his epic visions, and the use he makes of historic erudition." Jeffrey called Lord Byron "a mere mimic of styles and manners, and a great borrower of external character," adding, "He and Scott, accordingly, are full of imitations of all the writers from whom they ever derived gratification, and the two most original writers of the age who would thus appear to superficial observers to be the most deeply indebted to their predecessors." Yet the wave of Byronic influence not only overwhelmed Pushkin and Lermontoff in Russia, Mickiewicz, Gagarinski and Krasinski in Poland—it moved Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset and Dudevant in France, and reached Heine in Germany. It was Mickiewicz who once said that Byron was the secret link which bound the whole literature of the Slavs to the West. And if we were to pursue still further this interesting study, we should read of Coleridge lighting his fire from the candle of William Lisle Bowles, of De Quincey "preferring the ornate manner of Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne, and their contemporaries," of Shelley embodying in his "Alastor" and the lyrics echoes from Wordsworth and Moore, and of "suggestions which it is difficult to believe that Thackeray did not in the first instance owe to Dickens." "Who," asks A. W. Ward, "would venture to call Capt. Costigan a plagiarism from Mr. Snevellici, or to affect that Wenham and Wagg were copied from Pyke and Pluck, or that Major Pendennis was founded upon Major Bagstock, or the Old Campaigner in the Newcomes on the Old Soldier in Copperfield? But that suggestions were in these, and perhaps a few other instances, derived from Dickens by Thackeray it would, I think, be idle to deny."

In numerous cases there is affirmation, rather than denial, by the authors themselves. "I copied my personages," says Racine, "from the greatest painter of antiquity—I mean Tacitus; and I was then so full of my reading of this excellent historian that there is scarcely a brilliant touch in my tragedies of which he did not give me the idea." Dr. Johnson told Boswell that his style was founded on Sir William Temple. Southey, writing of his own work, says, "I see in 'The Doctor' a little of Rabelais, but not much; more of 'Tristram Shandy,' somewhat of Burton, perhaps more of Montaigne." "I am neither actor nor poet," Lessing tells us, "but I should be so poor, so short-sighted, if I had not learned in some degree to borrow others' wealth, to warm myself at others' fire, and to strengthen my eyes with the lenses of art." Goethe said to Eckermann one day, "We bring capacities with us, but we owe our development to a thousand influences from the great world out of which we appropriate what we can and what is suited to us. I owe much to the Greeks and the French; my debt to Shakespeare, Sterne and Goldsmith is infinite." John Stuart Mill admits that he rendered his style "at times lively and almost light" by the study of writers "who combined, in a remarkable degree, ease with force," among them Goldsmith and Fielding, Pascal and Voltaire. "Whenever I read a book or a composition that particularly pleased me," says Robert Louis Stevenson, "I must sit down at once and set myself to imitating that quality of propriety or conspicuous force, or happy distinction in style. I was unsuccessful at the commencement of it, but I got some practice in these vain bouts in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and in coordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Browne and Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann."

From such salient examples and opinions—the examples offered to suggest an unexhausted wealth of illustrative material, the opinions cited from experts writing with no special view of imitation in mind—it should be evident that spontaneity of product forms but a limited factor in individual achievement. In presence of them the whole edifice of so-called originality crumbles before our eyes as we examine it, but it crumbles only to be built up again on a more reasonable and enduring basis. A foundation of imitation, of repetition, of submission to habit and subjection to convention is required at the outset. The mass of social units must repeat their community with a close approximation to faithfulness. It is out of the general level thus secured that progressive variations take their rise, and it is among these variations that the claim for at least a relative spontaneity of individual achievement finds its greatest strength. Yet even here, in the common acceptance of the term, originality is not a true, but a pseudo-idea. The law of consciousness itself misleads us into diminishing race contributions and magnifying individual contributions. Not only do differences—variations from the customary—impress the average mind much more profoundly than likenesses, but phenomena in the present are vastly more easy to realize and appreciate than the long elapsed phenomena of the past. It was because the reflective grasp of the intellect matures only slowly that insight into evolutionary processes came late in the history of the race. The hypothesis of the origin of natural products by abrupt and sudden creative acts was a realizable—the only realizable—view of nature in an earlier stage of intellectual development; with the growth of mental power it became crude and unsatisfactory. When men progressed to the idea of metamorphosis by physical change the mind rested for a while in the notion of catastrophic vicissitudes, periodical upheavals that changed the face of the world. It took ages to reach the thought of evolution as the result of very slight changes accumulated through long intervals of time. So in our estimation of human products, it is vastly easier to regard them as arising suddenly and spontaneously as the creation of particular individuals, than to recognize them as the outcome of contributions made by all individuals.

Nor is it only that appreciation of the dependence of the present on the past grows with the progress of the race; the dependence itself is an increasing quantity. It was Comte who said that the longer our species lasts and the more civilized it becomes, the more does the influence of past generations over the present, and of mankind *en masse* over every individual in it, predominate over other forces. With the advancing unification of the race the scope for really "original" achievements by individuals is a diminishing, not an increasing quantity. And this is true in the realm of action, as well as in that of thought. The isolations of the tribe, making the subjection of its members all the more easy, gave opportunities for the development of the "strong man" which are not yielded by modern society. The captain of industry, the prominent statesman, the successful general, conspicuous as their doings may be, achieve results under an increasing control, and must more than every acknowledge the final domination of the masses whom they are supposed to wield. In the isolation of peoples and races the world had its Ghingis Khans, its Tamerlanes, its Alexanders, its Fredericks; the new international configurations make another Napoleon an impossibility. The old order in science brought forth individual inquirers who knew little or nothing of what others were doing, whereas to-day scientific discoveries, universally diffused, become the common property of all, and the investigators of nature are joined together, not merely by the printing press, but by national and international scientific organizations. The separate compartment method of study so favorable to individual variations in science has also passed for literature. In earlier times, when education was costly and rare, individual writers stood out like giants above the mass of their contemporaries. For the one thus conspicuous we now have hundreds in every large community who can write well and with some degree of literary power. And if we turn to the nations which have given us our greatest books in the past, we find them nurturing, not figures isolated by surpassing gifts, but swarms of able *litterateurs* who compel our attention without always dazzling us with their genius. The danger of our distributed culture is not that it may produce too many great names, but that such few as give promise of appearing will find themselves swamped in the dead level of literary mediocrity.

We have now seen, not only that the "new things" of human contriving are all of them based on older things, but that even the newest of them spring far less from a single personal source than from the individual "originator" plus the whole of his contemporaries and predecessors. Originality is of the race, and not in any valid sense of the individual. The progressive variation subsumes and requires the whole hierarchy of such variations in the past. The ascending step of the innovator is indeed indispensable to advance, but it can be taken only with the whole stairway of previous human progress for its substructure. As the most striking individual traits of the human countenance would be lost in a composite photograph which included all living men, so the individual achievement dwindles into comparative insignificance when viewed against the background of all human achievements. The story of man's dependence upon his kind is really the story of nature writ large. The vibrating electron, the revolving planet, the rushing star, the gathering nebula —these would be powerless and motionless without the universe. The topmost peak that pierces so proudly into the sky requires the vast bulk of supporting mountain for its elevation; the wave-front which wastes a cliff or destroys a breakwater has the whole length of thundering ocean behind it. The wonderful adaptations of the individual plant would be impossible without the long travail of the species to which it belongs. Is it less reasonable to say that the most brilliant achievement of the human individual receives its impulse and derives its possibility from the total life out of which it also emerges?

Nor does the power of initiative, of self-reliance, lose anything by being regarded not as self-sourced, but as system-sourced. It rather gains immensely from recognition of the mighty reservoir which may be depended upon and drawn from for individual human effort. In the new conception of originality which science has done so much to develop, each man will more than ever look for his salvation to the larger self which is outside; and it is within this wider framework of opportunity that the determination to be "original" will find increased scope for exercise. The individual contribution is to grow rather than diminish, but it will grow just because the streams that feed it flow in from the present and up from the past in ever augmented volume. The progressive variation is to have a value unheard of before, yet its blessing will be multiplied, not by any solitary virtue of the individual, but by the accumulated richness of human powers and the advancing unification of mankind. The innovator most likely to be "original" in the future is not he who, in mistaken independence, lays claim to a lawless spontaneity of production unrelated to the total yield of human effort but the man who, most completely realizing and utilizing that yield, goes forth armed with the whole power of the race.

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